

Utah's Division of Child and Family Services

Salt Lake Region Report

Qualitative Case Review Findings

Reviews Conducted

October 22-25, 2012

December 3-6, 2012

A Report by

The Office of Services Review, Department of Human Services

I. Introduction

The FY 2013 Salt Lake Region Qualitative Case Reviews (QCR's) were held the weeks of October 22-25, 2012 and December 3-6, 2012. Reviewers were selected from the Office of Services Review, the Division of Child and Family Services, community partners, and other interested parties. There were two out-of-state representatives from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and the Los Angeles County Division of Child and Family Services who participated as reviewers. Reviewers also included individuals from the following in-state organizations and agencies:

- The Adoption Exchange
- Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
- Fostering Healthy Children
- Juvenile Justice Services
- Utah Foster Care Foundation
- Valley Mental Health
- Family Support Center
- Office of Child Protection Ombudsman
- Salt Lake County Youth Services
- Utah Youth Village

There were 50 cases randomly selected for the Salt Lake Region reviews (25 cases for each review). The reviewed cases included 41 foster care cases and nine in-home cases. One case was not scored because the target child refused to participate in the review process. All six offices in the region had cases selected as part of the random sample, which included the Metro, Mid Towne, Oquirrh, South Towne, Transition to Adult Living (TAL), and Tooele offices. A certified lead reviewer and shadow reviewer were assigned to each case. Information was obtained through in-depth interviews with the child (if old enough to participate), his or her parents or other guardians, foster parents (if child was placed in foster care), caseworker, teacher, therapist, other service providers, and others having a significant role in the child's life. Additionally, the child's file, including prior CPS investigations and other available records, was reviewed.

Staff from the Office of Services Review met with region staff on February 13, 2013 in an exit conference to review the results of the region's QCR. Scores and data analysis were reviewed with the region.

II. Stakeholder Observations

The results of the QCR should be considered within a broad context of local or regional interaction with community partners. Each year the Office of Service Review staff supporting the qualitative reviews interview key community stakeholders such as birth families, youth, foster parents, providers, representatives from the legal community, other community agencies, and DCFS staff. On November 26, 2012 members of the OSR staff interviewed individuals and groups of DCFS staff and community partners. DCFS staff members who were interviewed included the Regional Director, region administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers. Community partners interviewed included guardians ad litem, assistant attorneys general, foster parents, and service providers. Strengths and opportunities for improvement were identified by the various groups of stakeholders as described below.

ASSISTANT ATTORNEYS GENERAL AND GUARDIANS AD LITEM

Strengths

Caseworker Training - Workers seem to be better trained. The average caseworker is a step above the average worker of a decade ago. Caseworkers do a better job of getting information and documents to the attorneys and putting services for children and families in place. The training team in Salt Lake has listened to the AG's concerns about training. AG's currently provide a brief piece of caseworker training early in the training process. In addition, they would like to start doing a longer training piece later in the process.

E-warrant System - The e-warrant system has worked very smoothly. It's definitely better than the former way of doing business. It's been very effective.

FIAT Team - The FIAT (Family Interventions Assessment Team) is phenomenal. Caseworkers in the field are getting solid information about how to work with families in the least intrusive manner thanks to the initial assessments this team is doing.

DCFS Administrative Support of Attorneys General (AG's) - Salt Lake administration is very supportive of the AG's, and caseworkers seem to be happier with the AG's than they've been in the past. DCFS and the AG's are talking together about how to get to the same outcome. Both sides are willing to negotiate and everyone behaves professionally.

Parental Defense - There are no problems with parental representation in the Third District. Parents have competent legal counsel. The defense attorneys and conflict attorneys do a good job. They know which fights to engage in and which to let go. Parents get a fair chance and all sides present equally to the court. There's a healthy balance between DCFS wanting more time for parents to complete services and the AG's holding parents to the time frames. The AG's trust the defense counsel and like to have workers talk to them directly about issues.

Kinship Placements - Kinship options for placement are explored right away and Guardians ad Litem (GAL's) get the information they need. DCFS is also doing a better job of re-exploring kin again later in the life of the case.

Post-adoption Issues - The Regional Director has worked hard to deal with post-adoption issues.

Locating Fathers - DCFS is doing better at locating fathers regardless of whether paternity has been legally established or not.

Improvement Opportunities

Communication - DCFS and the court system need to interface electronically.

Timeliness of Drug Testing - The results of drug testing are not available in a timely manner. It's taking two or three days to get the results.

GAL's not in District Court - There are no more GAL's in District Court, so there is no neutral fact gatherer in those cases. AG's are concerned those cases may get bumped to them to handle. The change may also lead to CPS having to investigate more cases.

Communication between GAL's and Partners -

- Sometimes GAL's are not made aware until after the fact that children have been moved or placed with siblings.
- GAL's want to be notified when there is a new CPS investigation on an ongoing case, regardless of whether the allegation is supported or not.
- Lots of workers give GAL's too little notice of when team meetings will be held, or a GAL shows up for a team meeting and finds out it's been cancelled.

Over Reliance on Proctor Agencies - There is a lack of communication between proctor agencies and caseworkers. Caseworkers rely on the proctor agency too much and let them run the case. Workers should know what's going on in the case and be the ones who are making the decisions for the children.

Lack of Interpreters and non-English Services - For some groups (for example, Africans) interpreters can't be found, and it's even more difficult to find someone to provide services in the native language. Because services can't be provided in the native language, an interpreter has to be provided every time services are provided.

Lack of Concurrent Planning - Workers do a good job of explaining their reasons for their primary recommendations, but they're not prepared with a concurrent plan. If the judge doesn't agree with the primary recommendation, the worker isn't prepared to present another option. For example, GAL's need to know early on about other possible permanency options other than the kin family with whom the child was placed.

Incompetency Cases - Incompetency cases are currently the biggest issue for the AG's. Judges need to be informed of what the options are so they know there are options available other than removing children from their homes.

FOSTER PARENTS

Note: There were only four foster parents in attendance for the interview, so comments may not be representative of the majority of foster parents in the region.

Strengths

Quality of Caseworkers - There are many good caseworkers. Good caseworkers are the ones that are available to foster parents, even after hours, and they call foster parents back. Good workers provide a lot of emotional support to foster parents. Foster parents always feel better after a home visit from a good worker. Good workers validate the foster parents and tell them they're doing a great job.

Resource Family Consultants (RFC) - The RFC's are good. They can answer questions when foster parents can't get hold of the workers.

Fostering Healthy Children (FHC) Nurses - The nurses are awesome. They keep foster parents informed of when children need medical and dental exams done. Many nurses go the extra mile, such as supervising doctor visits when parents attend and being available to caseworkers after hours.

Improvement Opportunities

Availability of Caseworkers - Caseworkers sometimes turn their phones off and aren't available. Foster parents can't get a hold of anyone after 5:00 on weekdays or anytime on weekends. Foster parents would like to see a 24-hour "Ask-a-Worker" line so they can get someone to answer their questions after hours.

Unavailability of Services - Foster parents have observed that the tighter the budget gets, the more services children and families lose. For example, TAL classes are only offered to youth who are over 17 years old, funds aren't available for other types of classes, and children have to be placed in residential treatment in order for Medicaid to pay for services. There needs to be a place to temporarily put a child who is acting out or being assaultive. They would also like to see rewards for kids who do well such as movie passes or money for good grades.

Quality of Team Meetings - Foster parents question the value of team meetings because meetings they've attended haven't seemed clear about their objectives or been well structured. Foster parents wonder if birth parents understand what is expected of them. They would like to see workers be more gentle, yet more clear, when communicating with parents. For example, parents need to know that children will be placed for adoption if their parents don't succeed.

Separation of Siblings - Having siblings placed separately makes it incredibly hard on the mother and the children. Parents have to make multiple appointments for visits, family therapy sessions, etc. If a child has siblings, the foster parents should be informed of that.

PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Note: Community partners represented Utah Youth Village, CBTS and RISE.

Strengths

DCFS Cares- Caseworkers and administrators care about the children. They try to find supports and services for them. They have a passion for their work, the families, and the children.

Team Meetings- Team meetings are happening on the majority of cases.

Fostering Healthy Children Program- There is good communication between the providers and FHC nurses, so providers know when children are due for medical and dental exams. The providers appreciate the advance notice they get from the nurses when exams are due.

Immersion Day- The region had an immersion day. They invited people to meet DCFS staff and learn their process. Providers, law enforcement, and schools were there.

Improvement Opportunities

Services for Youth in Transition - There's a lack of services for youth transitioning out of care. Caseworkers are discharging youth at 18 with no plan for where they'll live; and there may or may not be a team meeting prior to discharge, depending on who the caseworker is.

Purchase Service Agreements (PSA) - Providers are trying to get PSA's in place before the placement occurs. DCFS has a pretty rigorous process of getting those approved, so they're often not approved until after the child has been placed. Per the contract, addendums have to be done when children are placed, but they're only being done about 40% of the time because workers don't realize they have to do them and they don't know how to do them.

Unavailability of Workers - There's a lack of communication between providers and workers. Workers are often unavailable. Their phones are off after 5:00 and they don't respond at all on Fridays. They also don't respond to the weekly e-mails providers send to them.

24 or 48-Hour Notice of Placement - Providers would like to have 24 to 48 hour notice of placement so children can meet the proctor parents before placement. Sometimes the providers call the proctor parent and let them know they're going to get a child only to find out the worker has already used a different placement. They hold placements open to accommodate workers and turn away other referrals, and then the worker doesn't use the placement.

Placement Information - Information about children is being withheld from proctor parents such as aggressive behavior, sexual behavior, etc., and then proctor parents get blindsided when behaviors occur soon after placement. Workers generally don't send assessments to providers; they rarely receive the CANS assessment.

Medicaid Cutbacks and Lack of Services - DCFS is hesitant to approve Medicaid services. Providers are operating on very thin margins, and all of their costs are rising. Providers who used to provide beds for DCFS children are now doing private care and making more money while dealing with fewer restrictions. There used to be funding for services after the children returned home to keep them at home. Now the children may get services for only a month after they return home. Providers are training workers about funds that are available for aftercare services that workers aren't aware of.

Addressing Permanency - Providers understand that achieving permanency is a priority, but they're concerned by the manner in which it's being addressed. A lot of workers are asking proctor parents out of the blue at team meetings if they want to adopt the child placed with them. This happens in the presence of the child, even if the child has only been in the home for a month or two. Also, providers feel DCFS threatens to remove children from their proctor placement if the proctor family doesn't want to adopt.

DCFS ADMINISTRATORS, SUPERVISORS, and CASEWORKERS

Strengths

Focus on Permanency - There's been a push for permanency, especially for TAL youth. The region is using a permanency continuum, permanency round tables, and working with kinship families to provide permanency. Workers have asked for permanency round tables on particular cases where they've needed help. Adoption parties and the Heart Gallery have been successful. Administrators have been reviewing every case that's been open more than 24 months without achieving permanency. There have been three specialists hired to focus on permanency. They're making sure everyone receives correct information about what the permanency options are for children. Workers used to be content to leave children in a stable foster home, but now workers are thinking about how they can achieve permanency for them.

Family Interventions Assessment Team (FIAT) - The FIAT team was instituted at TAL last spring. They do a thorough assessment and craft a plan for how the children can stay in the home. There has been a significant improvement in providing a way for children to remain at home. They make clear recommendations so the court is comfortable with the children remaining at home. The assessments are all done by staff with clinical training, so they are high quality assessments.

Kinship Placements - Kinship specialists and Resource Family Consultants look for a kinship placement any time a removal is considered. There's a wider range of clinical services available to support kinship placements right from the start, and they remain in place through the adoption.

The specialists are making sure kinship families have the information they need and are informed about all the permanency options and what each would mean. The same specialist stays involved as a support for the family throughout the life of the case. The specialists coordinate with Department of Workforce Services and Office of Licensing. Because of these changes, there have been a lot more adoptions to kinship families.

Focus on In-home Cases - The region has focused on in-home services. Every month they look at the number of children in custody. The number of foster cases they have has consistently been dropping. They have actually moved children from foster care to in-home services. They embrace the philosophy of keeping children at home, but they still have the challenge of not having funding for services for children who remain home. A summit was held to educate on-call and CPS staff about resources that could be accessed to support children remaining at home.

Immersion Days - Providers, law enforcement, and others have been invited to participate in Immersion Days. Participants get to see the DCFS system and ask questions.

Partner Relationships - The region has a great relationship with Utah Foster Care Foundation and the Adoption Exchange.

Refugee Liaisons - Each office has a person who acts as a liaison to refugee communities. They partner with the Department of Workforce Services' refugee staff. The doors have been opened to work more effectively with the refugee community. They also have an Indian Child Welfare Act specialist in each DCFS office.

Locating Fathers - The region is focusing more on locating and involving fathers.

Equipment and Technology - Workers have been provided laptops and better cell phones with data capability. This enables workers to enter logs while they're out of the office and schedule appointments through their phones.

Improvement Opportunities

In-home Services Contracts - Providers have built their programs around foster cases, so until there are Requests for Proposals to provide in-home services, providers won't change their approach. Providers will adapt their programs to provide whatever DCFS identifies as the need, but contracts have to be put in place first. Providers need to be brought into the process of changing contracts from foster care to in-home services, and they need to understand the reasons for the changes. The more closely they work with the community, the better the community will understand that the need is no longer for foster care services. The system needs to build the infrastructure to make in-home services work. There have been conversations with providers, but nothing concrete has been done about getting contracts in place.

Custody Beyond Age 18 - A lot of the judges are keeping the kids in past age 18. Many of the TAL youth now in custody are over age 18. TAL youth used to stay in care about 2 ½ years, but the time in care for them is even longer now.

Caseworker Turnover - Particular offices have been hit very hard with workers leaving. Workers are very discouraged because they don't get raises, yet caseloads are rising.

Plans - Plans aren't being used as a tool with the families. The region is focusing on making plans the gateway for moving a child toward permanency, not just paperwork. Workers usually have an implicit plan, but they don't update the written plan to reflect the implicit plan because they're not due yet. Some workers are encouraged to make an addendum to the plan after each team meeting. Some of the inattention to written plans may be due to workers waiting for a new version of the plan to be released in SAFE. Workers are in the habit of writing the plan and then presenting it to the family.

Out-of-State Adoptions - Many children are being placed out-of-state for adoptions. This makes it hard to provide smooth transitions because workers and children can't go meet the families or the new workers. It's difficult to assure the child's needs will be met after placement. This puts these adoptions at risk of disrupting.

Adoption Disruptions - There are more and more adoption disruptions. Children and youth have lots of issues and behaviors that make it hard to maintain the adoption. Adoptive parents often wait too long to ask for help. By then the children need intensive services. Lots of services are put in place while the child is in placement as a foster child, but when the adoption is finalized the services are lost, and then the adoption disrupts.

Lack of Services - It's very difficult to find a residential placement for a child. Ever since the changes to Medicaid, there's been a shortage of residential placements. Residential treatment centers have closed their doors or stopped taking DCFS children.

Clinical Program - The clinical program is in limbo, and it's not clear whether it will remain or be disbanded. There are mixed feelings about the team, the quality of their work, and whether their funding could be better used elsewhere. Workers and supervisors don't agree on what the model of practice should be for clinical workers, and whether or not they need to follow the same guidelines as other cases regarding Case Process Review.

Judges Preclude In-home Cases - Judges are a barrier to workers doing in-home cases because they feel better about removing the children. Often, judges don't believe children can be kept safe at home. If one in-home case fails, judges won't try another one.

Career Ladder - DCFS needs a career ladder so workers have somewhere to advance. Workers who get advanced degrees or licenses have nowhere to advance. Also, new workers make the same salary as workers who have been with the agency for several years. And some state agencies in Utah don't require either licenses or degrees, yet their workers are paid more than DCFS workers are paid.

III. Child and Family Status, System Performance, Analysis, and Trends












The QCR findings are presented in graphic form to help quantify the observations of the qualitative review. Graphs show a comparison of scores for past years' reviews with the current review. The graphs of the two broad domains of Child and Family Status and System Performance show the percent of cases in which the key indicators were judged to be "acceptable." A six-point rating scale is used to determine whether or not an indicator is judged to be acceptable. Reviewers scored each of the cases reviewed using this rating scale. The range of ratings is as follows:

- 1: Completely Unacceptable
- 2: Substantially Unacceptable
- 3: Partially Unacceptable
- 4: Minimally Acceptable
- 5: Substantially Acceptable
- 6: Optimal Status/Performance

Child and Family Status and System Performance are evaluated using 15 key indicators. Graphs presenting the overall scores for each domain are presented below. They are followed by graphs showing the distribution of scores for each indicator within each of the two domains.

Child and Family Status Indicators

Overall Status

Salt Lake Region Child Status									
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	Standard: 70% on all indicators except Safety which is 85% Standard: Criteria 85% on overall score	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13 Current Scores	Trends
Safety	48	1	 98%	94%	90%	88%	90%	98%	Improved and above standard
Child Safe from Others	49	0	 100%			93%	100%	100%	Status Quo and above standard
Child Risk to Self or Others	48	1	 98%			92%	90%	98%	Improved and above standard
Stability	37	12	 76%	73%	61%	88%	71%	76%	Improved and above standard
Prospect for Permanence	28	21	 57%	76%	58%	58%	59%	57%	Decreased and below standard
Health/Physical Well-being	49	0	 100%	100%	99%	100%	98%	100%	Improved and above standard
Emot./Behavioral Well-being	45	4	 92%	85%	86%	88%	84%	92%	Improved and above standard
Learning	45	4	 92%	82%	88%	83%	94%	92%	Decreased but above standard
Family Connections	28	6	 82%				81%	82%	Improved and above standard
Satisfaction	46	3	 94%	99%	92%	90%	88%	94%	Improved and above standard
Overall Score	46	3	 94%	91%	90%	88%	86%	94%	Improved and above standard
			0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%						

Safety

Summative Questions: Is the child safe from manageable risks of harm (caused by others or by the child) in his/her daily living, learning, working and recreational environments? Are others in the child's daily environments safe from the child? Is the child free from unreasonable intimidation and fears at home and school?

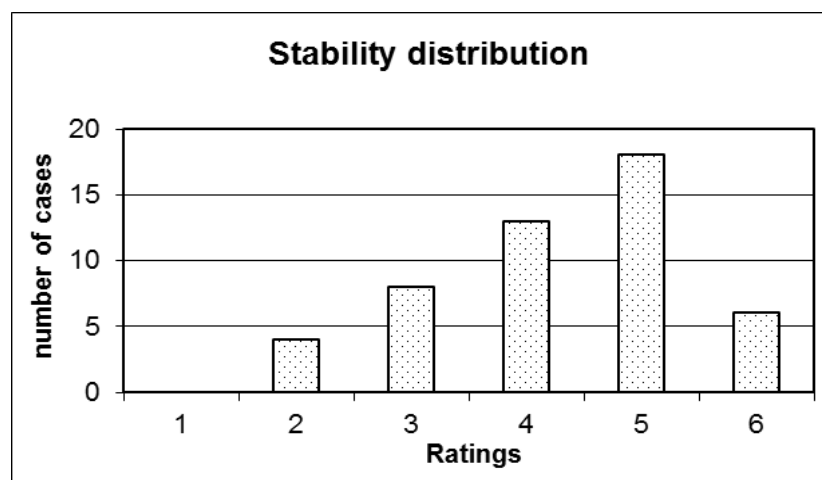
Findings: 98% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is a significant increase over last year's score of 90% and is above standard.



Stability

Summative Questions: Are the child's daily living and learning arrangements stable and free from risk of disruption? If not, are appropriate services being provided to achieve stability and reduce the probability of disruption?

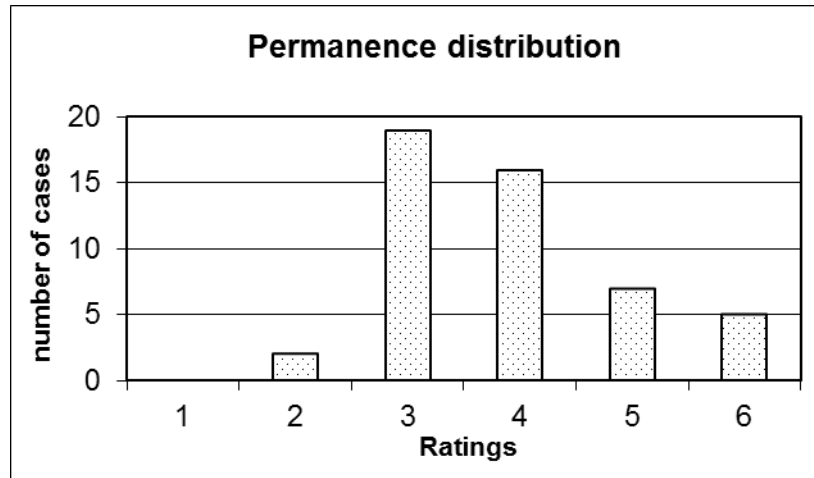
Findings: 76% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is an increase from last year's score of 71% and above standard.



Prospects for Permanence

Summative Questions: Is the child living in a home that the child, caregivers, and other stakeholders believe will endure until the child becomes independent? If not, is a permanency plan presently being implemented on a timely basis that will ensure that the child will live in enduring relationships that provide a sense of family, stability, and belonging?

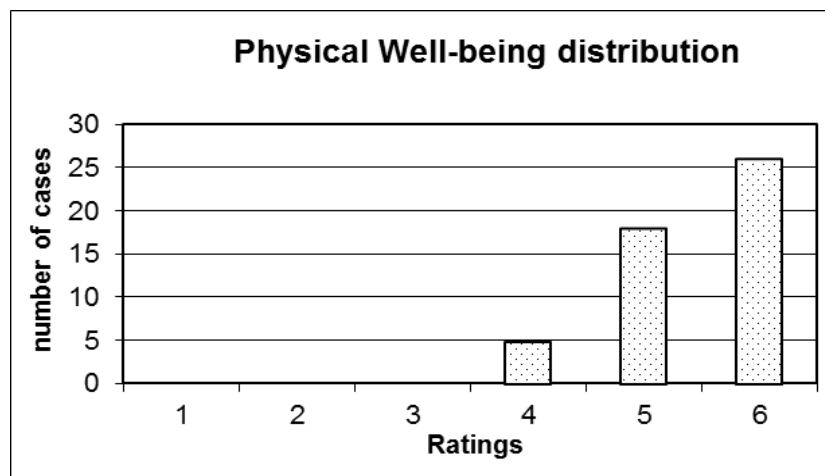
Findings: 57% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is nearly identical to last year's score of 59% and the two prior years' scores of 58%.



Health/Physical Well-Being

Summative Questions: Is the child in good health? Are the child's basic physical needs being met? Does the child have health care services, as needed?

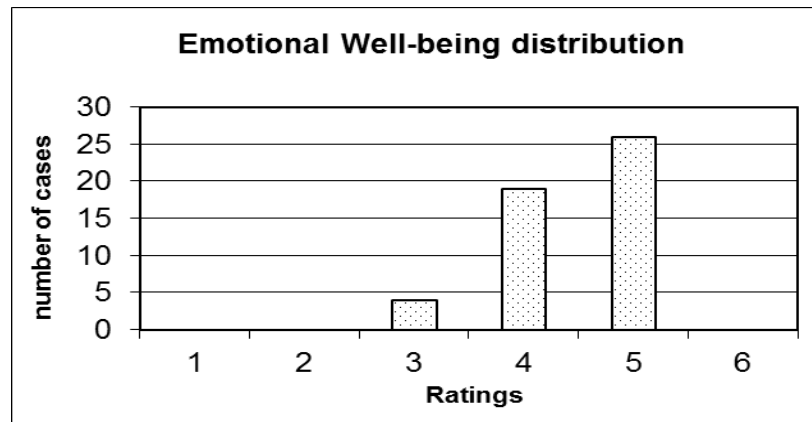
Findings: 100% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is even higher than last year's score of 98% and well above standard.



Emotional/Behavioral Well-Being

Summative Questions: Is the child doing well emotionally and behaviorally? If not, is the child making reasonable progress toward stable and adequate functioning, emotionally and behaviorally, at home and school?

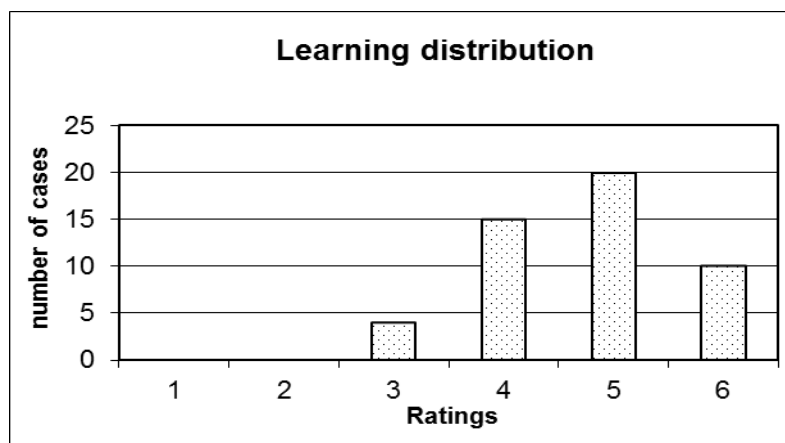
Findings: 92% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a significant increase from last year's score of 84% and far above standard.



Learning Progress

Summative Question: (For children age five and older.) Is the child learning, progressing and gaining essential functional capabilities at a rate commensurate with his/her age and ability? (Note: There is a supplementary scale used with children under the age of five that puts greater emphasis on developmental progress. Scores from the two scales are combined for this report.)

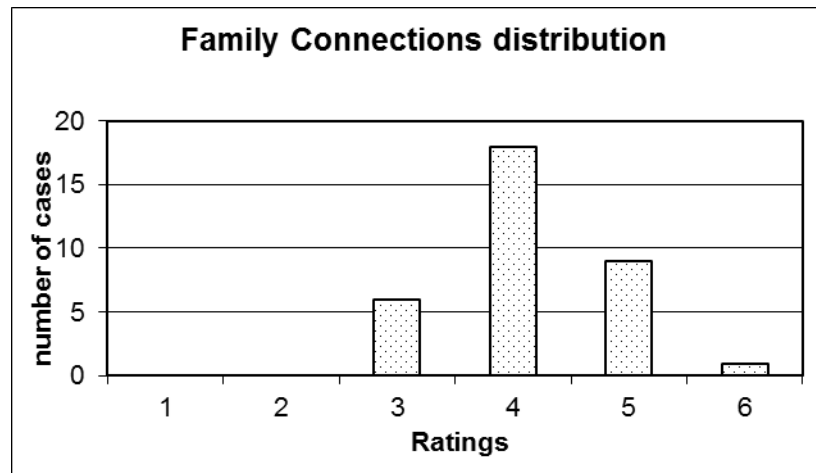
Findings: 92% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is nearly equal to last year's score of 94%.



Family Connections

Summative Question: While the child and family are living apart, are family relationships and connections being maintained through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies, unless compelling reasons exist for keeping them apart?

Findings: 82% of cases scored acceptable on Family Connections. This year (the second year that data has been collected) the indicator scored nearly identical to last year (82% versus 81%). This indicator measures whether or not the relationship between the child and the mother, father, siblings, and other important family members is being maintained. The scores for the mothers and fathers were similar at 69% and 65% respectively. The score for other family members (grandparents, aunts, etc.) was much higher at 94%.

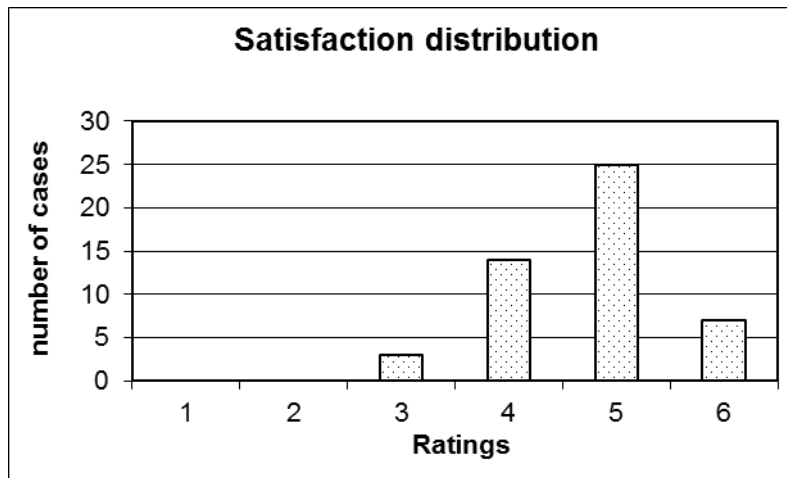


Family Connections	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY13
Siblings	8	2	80%
Mother	18	8	69%
Father	11	6	65%
Other	15	1	94%

Satisfaction

Summative Question: Are the child, parent/guardian, and substitute caregiver satisfied with the supports and services they are receiving?

Findings: 94% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6) on the overall Satisfaction score. This is an increase from last year's score of 88% and substantially above standard. Reviewers rated the satisfaction of children, mothers, fathers, and caregivers. Scores for the individual parties ranged from 92% for children to 60% for fathers.

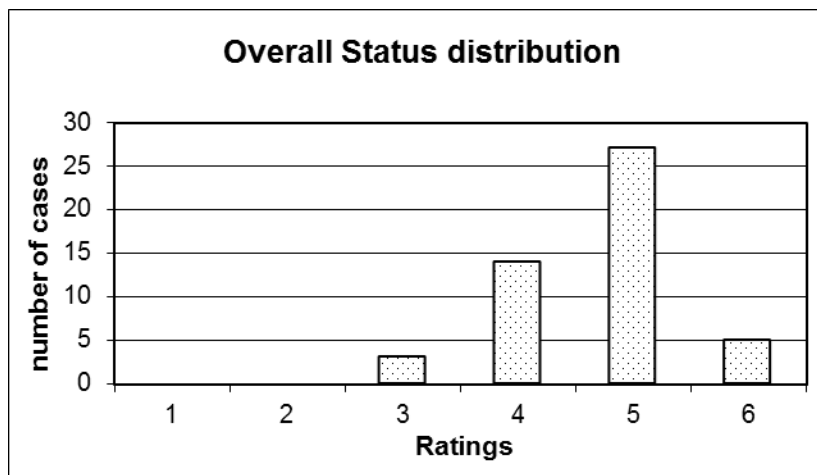


	# of cases	# of cases	
Satisfaction	(+)	(-)	FY13
Child	22	2	92%
Mother	20	7	74%
Father	6	4	60%
Caregiver	38	1	97%

Overall Child and Family Status









Summative Questions: Based on the Qualitative Case Review scores determined for the Child and Family Status indicators, how well are this child and family presently doing? A special scoring procedure is used to determine Overall Child and Family Status using the 6-point rating scale. In addition to scoring a 4 with this procedure, four of the first seven status indicators (minus Satisfaction) must score acceptable in order for the Overall Score to be acceptable. A unique condition affects the rating of Overall Child and Family status in every case: The Safety indicator always acts as a “trump” so that the Overall Child and Family status rating cannot be acceptable unless the Safety indicator is also acceptable.

Findings: 94% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). The overall Child and Family Status score increased significantly from last year’s score of 86% and is well above standard.



System Performance Indicators

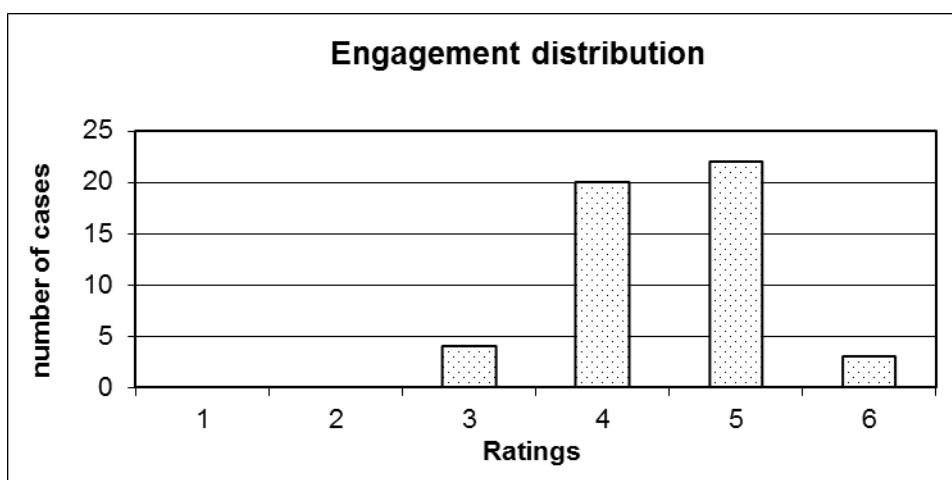
Overall System

Salt Lake Region System Performance - Combined									
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)		FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	
			Standard: 70% on all indicators					Current	
			Standard: 85% on overall score					Scores	Trends
Engagement	45	4	 92%	91%	86%	76%	94%	92%	Decreased but above standard
Teaming	36	13	 73%	73%	79%	69%	65%	73%	Improved and above standard
Assessment	39	10	 80%	78%	72%	63%	82%	80%	Decreased but above standard
Long-term View	30	19	 61%	78%	65%	58%	73%	61%	Decreased and below standard
Child & Family Plan	32	17	 65%	72%	69%	61%	65%	65%	Status Quo and below standard
Intervention Adequacy	43	6	 88%	97%	92%	85%	84%	88%	Improved and above standard
Tracking & Adapting	45	4	 92%	91%	86%	83%	88%	92%	Improved and above standard
Overall Score	43	6	 88%	93%	86%	83%	86%	88%	Improved and above standard
			0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%						

Child and Family Engagement

Summative Questions: Are family members (parents, grandparents, and stepparents) or substitute caregivers active participants in the process by which service decisions are made about the child and family? Are parents/caregivers partners in planning, providing, and monitoring supports and services for the child? Is the child actively participating in decisions made about his/her future?

Findings: 92% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is nearly equal to last year's score of 94% and far above standard. Separate scores were given for child, mother, father and significant others. An overall score was then selected by the reviewer. The overall score of 92% was similar to the Child score of 97% and the Other score of 94%. The Mother score was significantly lower at 74% while the Father score was just 57%.

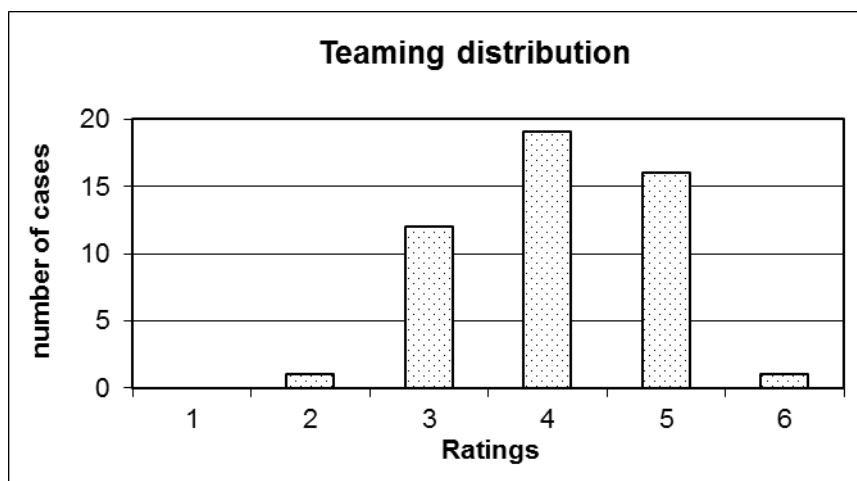


Engagement	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY13
Child	38	1	97%
Mother	26	9	74%
Father	13	10	57%
Other	23	1	94%

Child and Family Teaming

Summative Questions: Do the people who provide services to the child/family function as a team? Do the actions of the team reflect a pattern of effective teamwork and collaboration that benefits the child and family? Is there effective coordination and continuity in the organization and provision of services across all interveners and service settings? Is there a single point of coordination and accountability for the assembly, delivery, and results of services provided for this child and family?

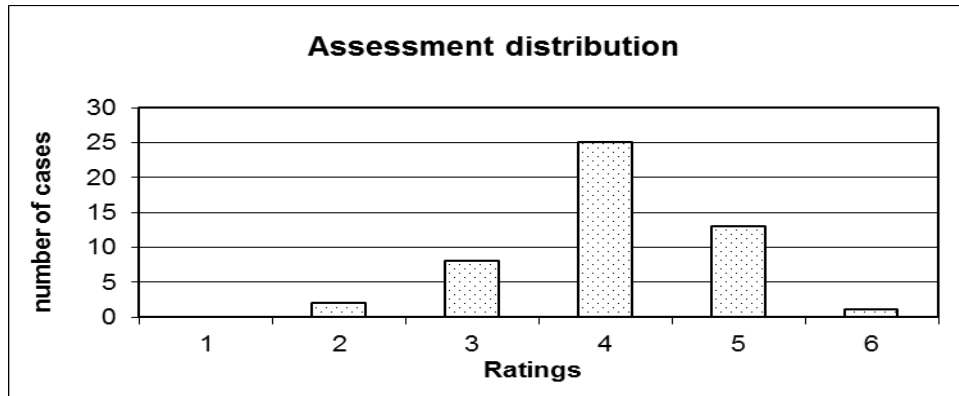
Findings: 73% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a significant increase from last year's score of 65%, and the score is now above the 70% standard.



Child and Family Assessment

Summative Questions: Are the current, obvious and substantial strengths and needs of the child and family identified through existing assessments, both formal and informal, so that all interveners collectively have a “big picture” understanding of the child and family and how to provide effective services for them? Are the critical underlying issues identified that must be resolved for the child to live safely with his/her family, independent of agency supervision, or to obtain an independent and enduring home?

Findings: 80% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is nearly identical to last year's score of 82% and well above the 70% standard. Individual scores were given for this indicator. The highest score was the Caregiver score at 90%. The Child score was just slightly lower at 86%. The Mother score was substantially lower at 57% and the Father score was even lower at 42%.

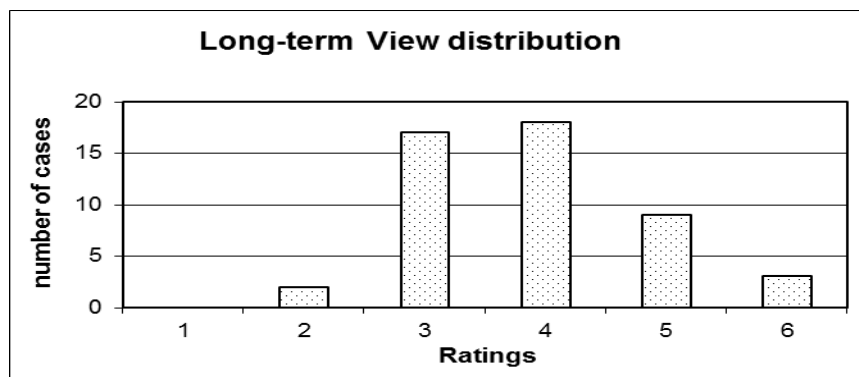


	# of cases	# of cases	
Assessment	(+)	(-)	FY13
Child	42	7	86%
Mother	20	15	57%
Father	10	14	42%
Caregiver	35	4	90%

Long-Term View

Summative Questions: Is there an explicit plan for this child and family that should enable them to live safely and independent from the child welfare system? Does the plan provide direction and support for making smooth transitions across settings, providers and levels of service?

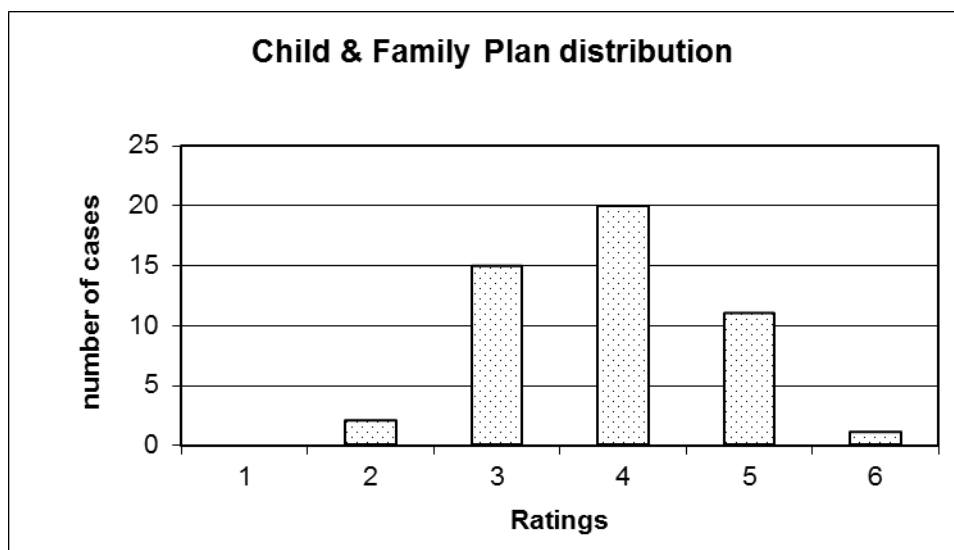
Findings: 61% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a significant decrease from last year's score of 73% and below standard.



Child and Family Plan

Summative Questions: Is the Child and Family Plan individualized and relevant to needs and goals? Are supports, services and interventions assembled into a holistic and coherent service process that provides a mix of elements uniquely matched to the child/family's situation and preferences? Does the combination of supports and services fit the child and family's situation so as to maximize potential results and minimize conflicting strategies and inconveniences?

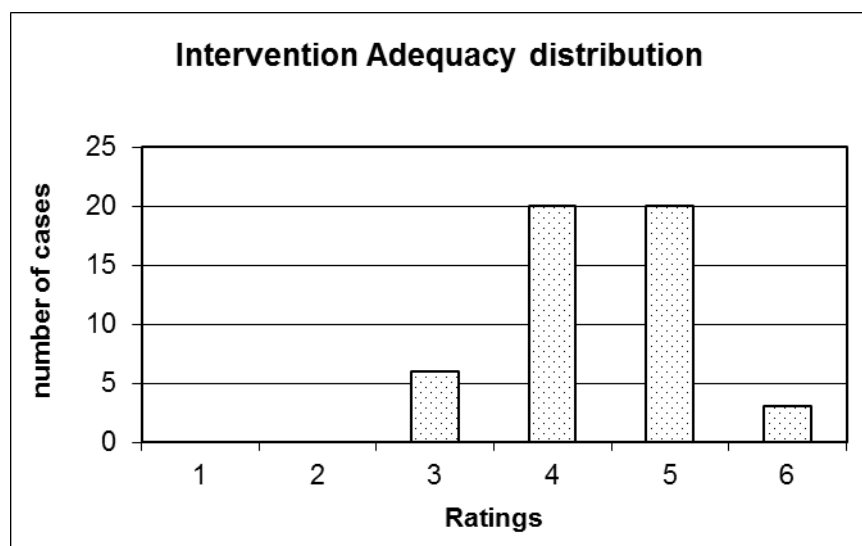
Findings: 65% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is identical to last year's score and below standard for the fourth consecutive year.



Intervention Adequacy

Summative Questions: Are the services and activities specified in the child and family plan 1) being implemented as planned, 2) delivered in a timely manner, and 3) at an appropriate level of intensity? Are the necessary supports, services and resources available to the child and family to meet the needs identified in the plan?

Findings: 88% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a modest increase over last year's score of 84% and well above standard. This indicator was scored separately for Child, Mother, Father, and Caregiver. The scores for Child and Caregiver exceeded the Overall Score at 94% and 95% respectively. The score for Mother was substantially lower at 65% and the score for Father was only 41%.

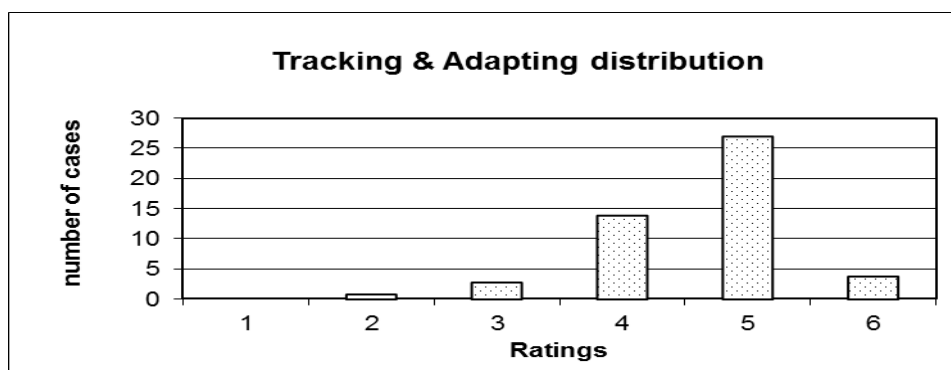


Intervention Adequacy	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY13
Child	46	3	94%
Mother	22	12	65%
Father	7	10	41%
Caregiver	37	2	95%

Tracking and Adapting

Summative Questions: Are the child and family status, service process, and results routinely followed along and evaluated? Are services modified to respond to the changing needs of the child and family and to apply knowledge gained about service efforts and results to create a self-correcting service process?

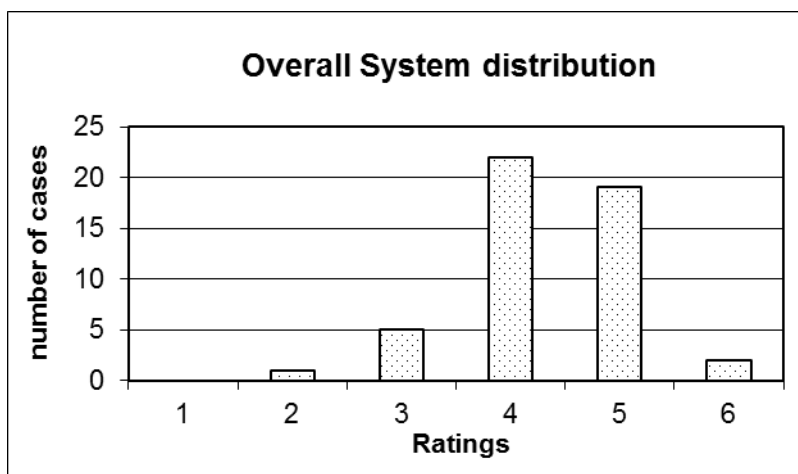
Findings: 92% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is an increase over last year's score of 88% and far above standard.



Overall System Performance

Summative Questions: Based on the Qualitative Case Review scores determined for System Performance indicators, how well is the service system functioning for this child now? A special scoring procedure is used to determine Overall System Performance using the 6-point rating scale. In addition to scoring a 4 with this procedure, four of the seven system performance indicators must score acceptable in order for the overall score to be acceptable.

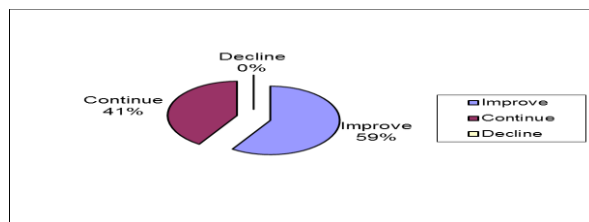
Findings: 88% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). The Overall System Performance score increased from last year's score of 86% and is above standard.



Status Forecast

One additional measure of case status is the reviewers' prognosis of the child and family's likely status in the next six months, given the current level of system performance. Reviewers respond to this question: "Based on current DCFS involvement for this child, family, and caregiver, is the child's overall status likely to improve, stay about the same, or decline over the next six months?"

Of the 49 cases reviewed, 41% (20 cases) anticipated an improvement in family status over the next six months. In 59% (29) of the cases, family status was likely to stay about the same. There were no cases where the reviewers believed that the case would decline over the next six months.



Outcome Matrix

The display below presents a matrix analysis of the service testing results during the current QCR. Each of the cells in the matrix shows the percent of children and families experiencing one of four possible outcomes:

- Outcome 1: child and family status acceptable, system performance acceptable
- Outcome 2: child and family status unacceptable, system performance acceptable
- Outcome 3: child and family status acceptable, system performance unacceptable
- Outcome 4: child and family status unacceptable, system performance unacceptable

The desired result is to have as many children and families in Outcome 1 as possible and as few in Outcome 4 as possible. It is fortunate that some children and families do well in spite of unacceptable system performance (Outcome 3). Experience suggests that these are most often either unusually resilient or resourceful children and families, or children and families who have some “champion” or advocate who protects them from the shortcomings of the system. Unfortunately, there may also be some children and families who, in spite of good system performance, do not do well (these children and families would fall in Outcome 2).

The outcome matrix for children and families reviewed during the Salt Lake Region review indicates that 84% of the cases had acceptable ratings on both Child Status and System Performance. This is a significant improvement from last year’s outcome of 76%. There was only one case that rated unacceptable on both child status and system performance.

	Favorable Status of Child	Unfavorable Status of Child	
Acceptable System Performance	Outcome 1 Good status for the child, agency services presently acceptable. n= 41 84%	Outcome 2 Poor status for the child, agency services minimally acceptable but limited in reach or efficacy. n= 2 4%	88%
Unacceptable System Performance	Outcome 3 Good status for the child, agency Mixed or presently unacceptable. n= 5 10%	Outcome 4 Poor status for the child, agency presently unacceptable. n= 1 2%	12%
	94%	6%	

V. Analysis of the Data

RESULTS BY CASE TYPE

The following tables compare how the different Case Types performed on some key child status and core system performance indicators. There were two Family Preservation cases (PFP in the sample. One of the cases scored unacceptable on assessment, but all other system indicators scored acceptable on both cases. There was one PSC case in the sample. It scored well on Child Status but scored very poorly on System Performance. The court ordered In-Home cases (PSS) scored 100% on Overall Child Status, but scored just below standard on Overall System Performance. Half of these cases had unacceptable scores on Teaming and Planning. Foster Care cases scored an impressive 93% on Child Status and scored better than PSS cases on Overall System Performance (90% versus 83%). When PFP and PSC cases are included, Foster Care cases outperformed In-home cases by a score of 90% to 78%.

Case Type		# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Foster Care	SCF	40	98%	55%	93%	90%	78%	85%	60%	68%	88%	95%	90%
In-Home	PSS	6	100%	67%	100%	100%	50%	67%	67%	50%	100%	83%	83%
In-Home	PSC	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
In-Home	PFP	2	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

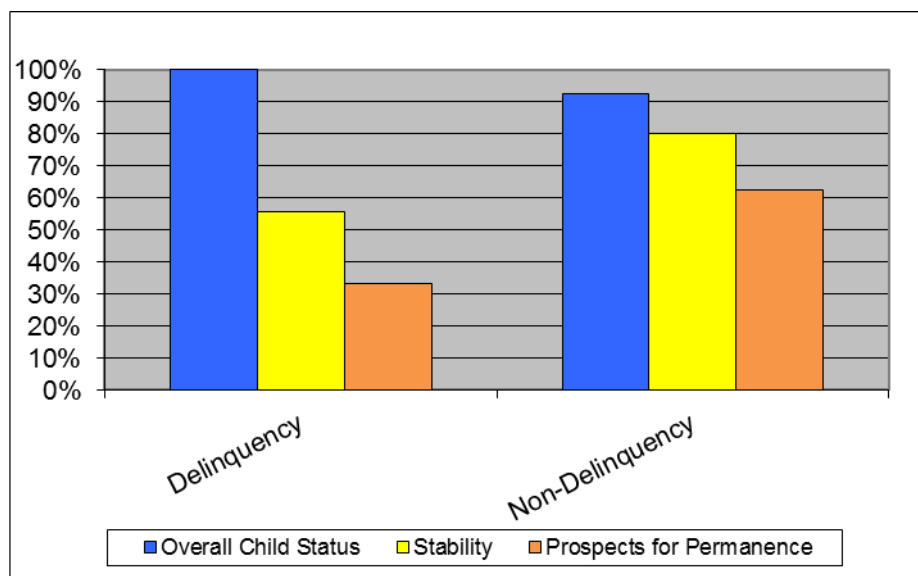
Case Type	# in Sample	Stability	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Overall System Performance
SCF	40	73%	55%	93%	90%
In-Home	9	89%	67%	100%	78%

Delinquency Cases

Collection of demographic information regarding cases included in the case sample includes the question, “Did the child come into services due to delinquency instead of abuse and neglect?” Nine of the 49 cases in the sample (18%) were reported to have entered services due to delinquency rather than abuse or neglect. This percentage is a decline from last year when 13 cases (27%) were delinquency cases.

The following table compares how cases identified as Delinquency cases and Non-Delinquency cases performed on Stability, Permanency, Overall Child Status, and Overall System Performance. Delinquency cases had substantially poorer outcomes in Stability and Permanency, but scored nearly the same on Overall System Performance.

Case Type	# in Sample	Stability	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Overall System Performance
Delinquency	9	56%	33%	100%	89%
Non-Delinquency	40	80%	63%	93%	88%



RESULTS BY PERMANENCY GOAL

The following table compares how the different Permanency Goals performed on some key child status and core system performance indicators. There were six different Permanency Goal types represented in the case sample. Prospects for Permanence tended to score higher on cases with the goal of Adoption and Remain Home. (The Guardianship-Relative case type actually scored the highest; however, there was only one case in the sample.) Prospects for Permanence were lowest for Individualized Permanency and Reunification cases. Overall System Performance scored very high on Adoption, Guardianship, and Individualized Permanency cases, but fell just below standard on Reunification cases and significantly below standard on Remain Home cases.

Permanency Goal	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Adoption	14	100%	71%	100%	86%	79%	93%	64%	71%	93%	93%	93%
Guardianship (Non-Rel)	2	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%	100%	100%
Guardianship (Relative)	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Individualized Perm.	7	86%	43%	71%	100%	86%	100%	57%	86%	100%	100%	100%
Remain Home	7	100%	71%	100%	100%	57%	57%	71%	57%	86%	71%	71%
Reunification	18	100%	44%	94%	89%	67%	67%	56%	61%	78%	100%	83%

RESULTS BY CASEWORKER DEMOGRAPHICS

Caseload

The following table compares how different caseload sizes performed on some key child status and core system performance indicators. Caseloads in the sample were divided into two categories: caseloads of 16 cases or less and caseloads of 17 cases or more. Of the workers in the sample, 45 out of 48 (94%) had caseloads of 16 cases or less. (Three workers did not provide data.) Regardless of caseload, all workers performed exceptionally well on Overall Child Status. The three workers with high caseloads also scored 100% on Overall System Performance. The workers with 16 or less cases scored just below standard on Overall System Performance; however, the sample sizes were quite lopsided, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn.

Caseload Size	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
16 cases or less	45	96%	58%	91%	89%	71%	76%	62%	60%	84%	89%	84%
17 cases or more	3	100%	33%	100%	100%	67%	100%	33%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Worker Experience

The following table compares how Length of Employment as a caseworker impacts performance. Six workers were new this year, and 12 workers were hired the previous year. Of the 49 workers who provided data, 37% had less than two years of experience. The caseworker's length of employment in their current position did not correlate well with the overall scores, with the newest workers and the most experienced workers both scoring below standard. The data suggests that an individual worker's level of performance is more of a factor in determining outcomes than the amount of time they have been employed as a caseworker.

Length of Employment in Current Position	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Less than 12 months	6	100%	33%	83%	67%	67%	83%	33%	67%	83%	100%	83%
12 to 24 months	12	100%	50%	100%	100%	83%	83%	75%	58%	92%	100%	92%
24 to 36 months	4	100%	75%	100%	100%	75%	50%	50%	25%	75%	75%	75%
36 to 48 months	1	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
48 to 60 months	7	86%	43%	86%	100%	86%	100%	43%	86%	100%	100%	100%
60 to 72 months	6	100%	83%	83%	100%	67%	100%	67%	67%	100%	100%	100%
More than 72 months	13	100%	62%	100%	92%	62%	62%	69%	69%	77%	77%	77%

RESULTS BY OFFICE

The following table compares how different region offices performed on some key child status and system performance indicators. Cases from all six offices in the Salt Lake Region were selected as part of the sample. The Mid Towne, South Towne, and Tooele offices performed exceptionally well. All three achieved scores of 100% on both Overall Child Status and Overall System Performance. The TAL office had the most room for improvement. Their Overall Child Status and Overall System Performance scores were both below standard (67% on both).

Office	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Metro	11	100%	55%	100%	91%	55%	73%	55%	55%	82%	91%	82%
Mid Towne	9	100%	44%	100%	78%	89%	89%	56%	56%	100%	100%	100%
South Towne	7	100%	71%	100%	100%	86%	86%	86%	71%	100%	86%	100%
TAL	9	89%	56%	67%	78%	56%	67%	44%	56%	67%	89%	67%
Tooele	2	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Oquirrh	11	91%	45%	91%	100%	91%	82%	55%	73%	91%	91%	91%

RESULTS BY AGE

OSR looked at the effect of age on Stability, Permanency, Overall Child Status, and Overall System Performance. The scores on Stability and Permanency were highest for the youngest children. They were lowest for teens ages 13 to 15, with children ages 6-12 scoring a little better.

Age	# in Sample	Stability	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Overall System Performance
0-5 years	14	86%	86%	100%	86%
6-12 years	14	71%	50%	100%	86%
13-15 years	10	60%	20%	90%	100%
16 + years	11	82%	64%	82%	82%

SYSTEM CORE INDICATORS

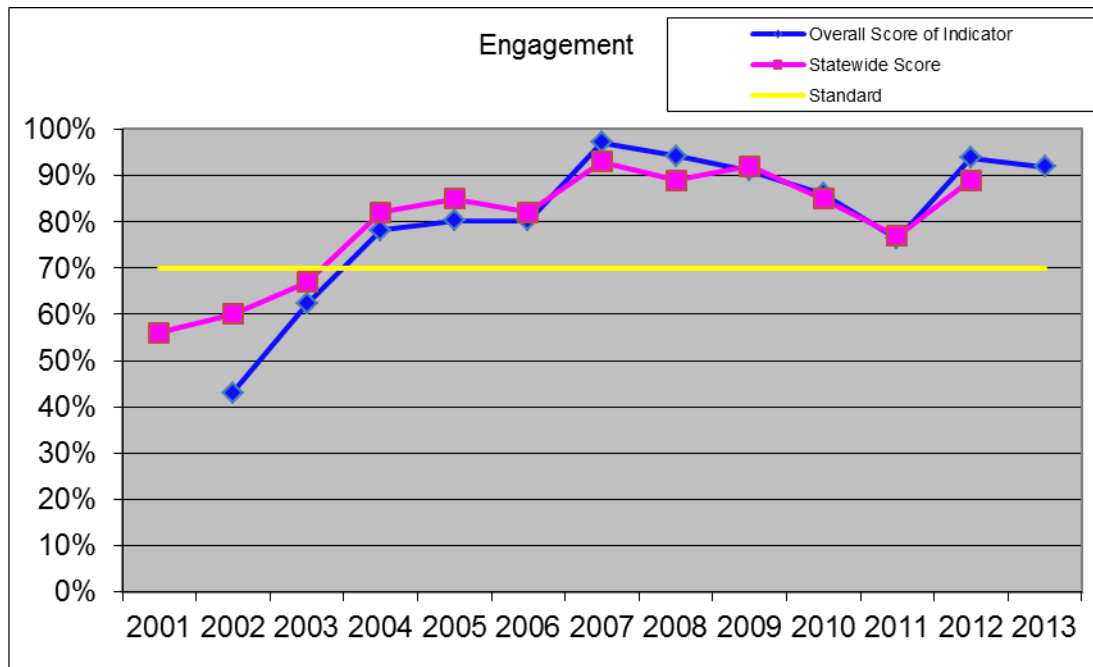
Below is data for all system indicators (Engagement, Teaming, Assessment, Long-term View, Child and Family Plan, Intervention Adequacy, and Tracking and Adaptation) over the last 12 years showing how the ratings of 1 (completely unacceptable), 2 (substantially unacceptable), 3 (partially unacceptable), 4 (minimally acceptable), 5 (substantially acceptable) and 6 (optimal) are trending within each indicator. The first chart for each indicator in the section below is an average of the scores for that indicator. The next chart and line graph represent the percentage of the indicator that scored within the acceptable range. The most ideal trend would be to see an increase in the average score of the indicator along with an increase in the percentage score. Statewide scores for FY2013 will not be available until the end of the year and therefore do not appear in the tables or charts.

There was a slight decline this year for the scores on Engagement and Assessment (94% to 92% and 82% to 80% respectively). Conversely, scores were slightly improved in Intervention Adequacy and Tracking and Adapting (84% to 88% and 88% to 92% respectively). Significant changes were seen in the Teaming and Long-term View scores. There was an eight point increase in the teaming score (65% to 73%) and a 12 point decrease in the Long-term View score (73% to 61%). The Child and Family Plan score was identical to last year's score (65%).

Child and Family Engagement

Although the percentage score on Engagement declined a little, there was a slight increase in the average score on the indicator. The percentage score exceeded the statewide average last year.

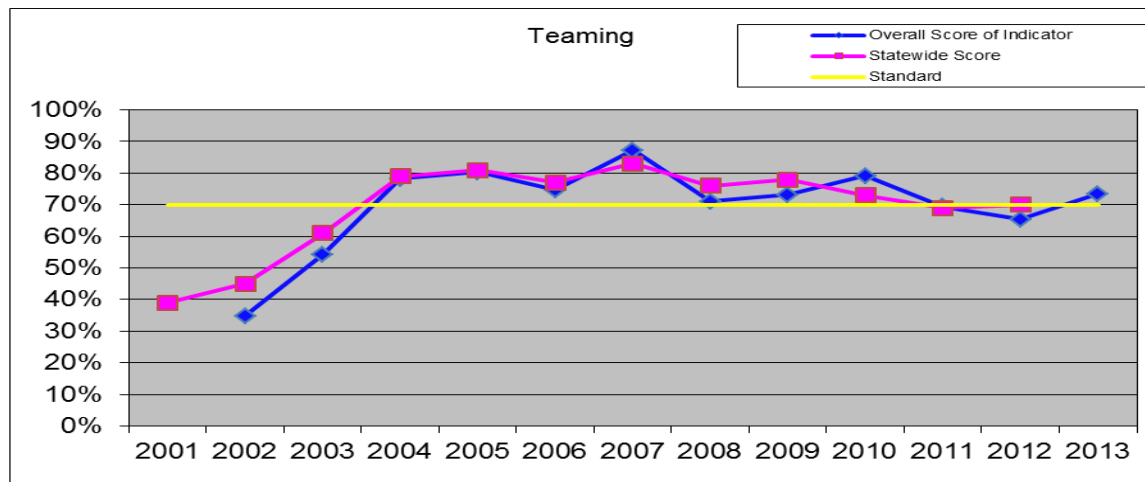
Engagement													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator		3.35	3.67	4.33	4.32	4.37	4.57	4.36	4.36	4.39	4.21	4.41	4.49
Overall Score of Indicator		43%	62%	78%	80%	80%	97%	94%	91%	86%	76%	94%	92%
Statewide Score	56%	60%	67%	82%	85%	82%	93%	89%	92%	85%	77%	89%	



Child and Family Team and Coordination

The Teaming score fell below standard the previous two years. This led the region to focus on teaming and provide many opportunities for workers to improve their knowledge and skills around this indicator. The region's efforts and attention to teaming were rewarded this year. The Teaming score rose back above standard (73%). Teaming was the indicator with the greatest improvement in score this year. The eight point improvement in the percentage score was accompanied by an improvement in the average score. The region score exceeded last year's statewide score.

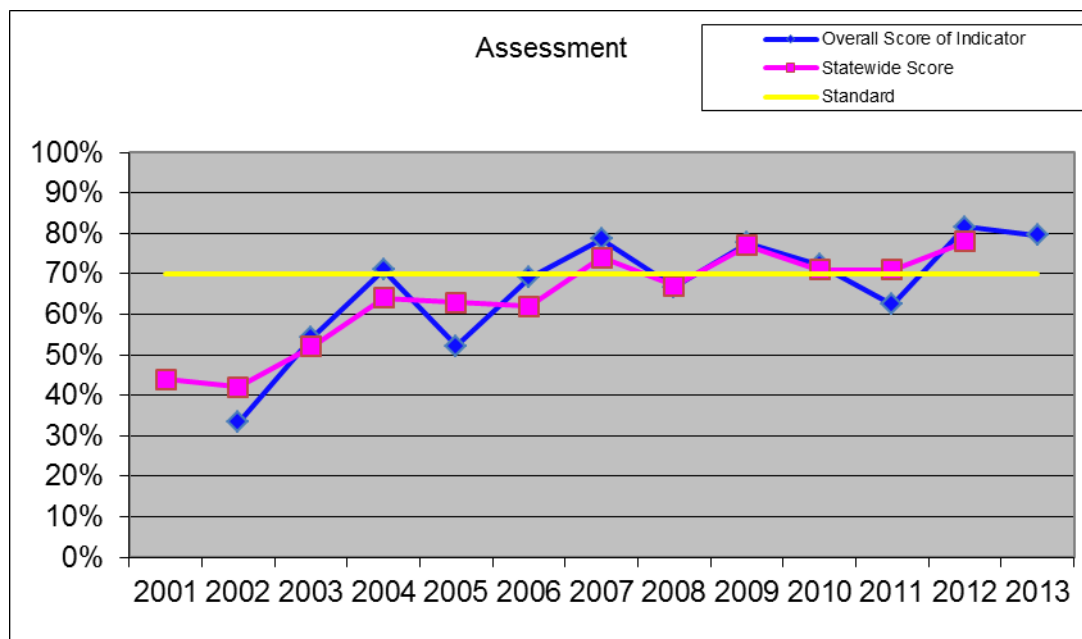
Teaming													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator		3.06	3.64	4.22	4.25	4.03	4.33	3.96	4.07	4.17	4.06	3.98	4.08
Overall Score of Indicator		35%	54%	78%	80%	75%	87%	71%	73%	79%	69%	65%	73%
Statewide Score	39%	45%	61%	79%	81%	77%	83%	76%	78%	73%	69%	70%	



Child and Family Assessment

As indicated in the line graph chart below, the Assessment indicator experienced a slight decrease in the percentage score; however, the average score improved. The region score exceeded the statewide score for last year.

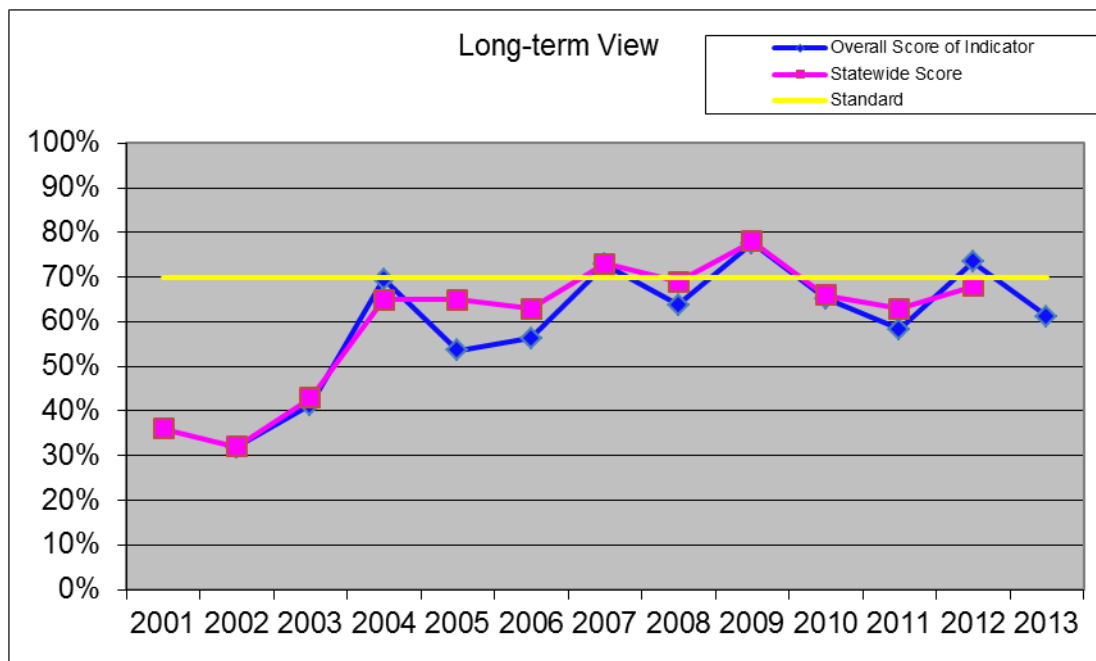
Assessment													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator		3.07	3.53	4.03	3.72	3.85	4.14	3.86	4.07	4.04	3.85	4.00	4.06
Overall Score of Indicator		33%	54%	71%	52%	69%	79%	67%	78%	72%	63%	82%	80%
Statewide Score	44%	42%	52%	64%	63%	62%	74%	67%	77%	71%	71%	78%	



Long-Term View

The Long-term View indicator, which had experienced a two-year decline, rebounded to an above standard score of 73% last year. Unfortunately, this score slid significantly below standard this year. The Long-term View score is one of only two indicators in which the region score was lower than the statewide score last year.

Long-Term View													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator		2.88	3.30	4.00	3.70	3.76	4.00	3.96	4.07	3.90	3.72	3.92	3.88
Overall Score of Indicator		32%	41%	70%	54%	56%	73%	64%	78%	65%	58%	73%	61%
Statewide Score	36%	32%	43%	65%	65%	63%	73%	69%	78%	66%	63%	68%	



Child and Family Plan

The Child and Family Plan score was identical to last year's score (65%). Child and Family Plan has scored below standard for four consecutive years. It also scored below last year's statewide score.

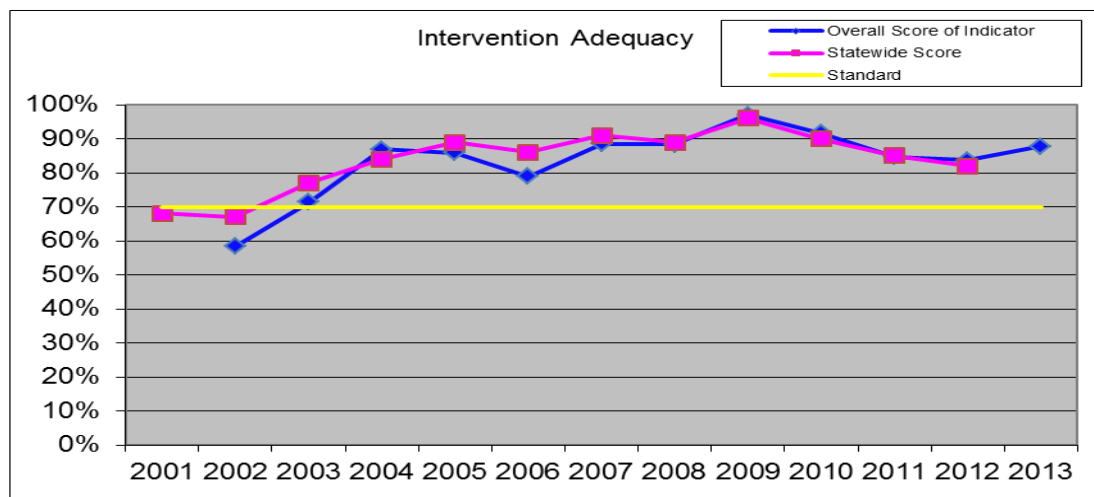
Child and Family Plan													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator		3.35	3.53	4.09	3.99	3.96	4.36	3.93	4.03	3.97	3.78	3.78	3.88
Overall Score of Indicator		43%	60%	75%	72%	68%	93%	71%	72%	69%	61%	65%	65%
Statewide Score	42%	52%	62%	72%	76%	75%	88%	78%	78%	72%	62%	67%	



Intervention Adequacy

Intervention Adequacy showed improvement in both the average score and the percentage score. The region score also exceeded last year's statewide score.

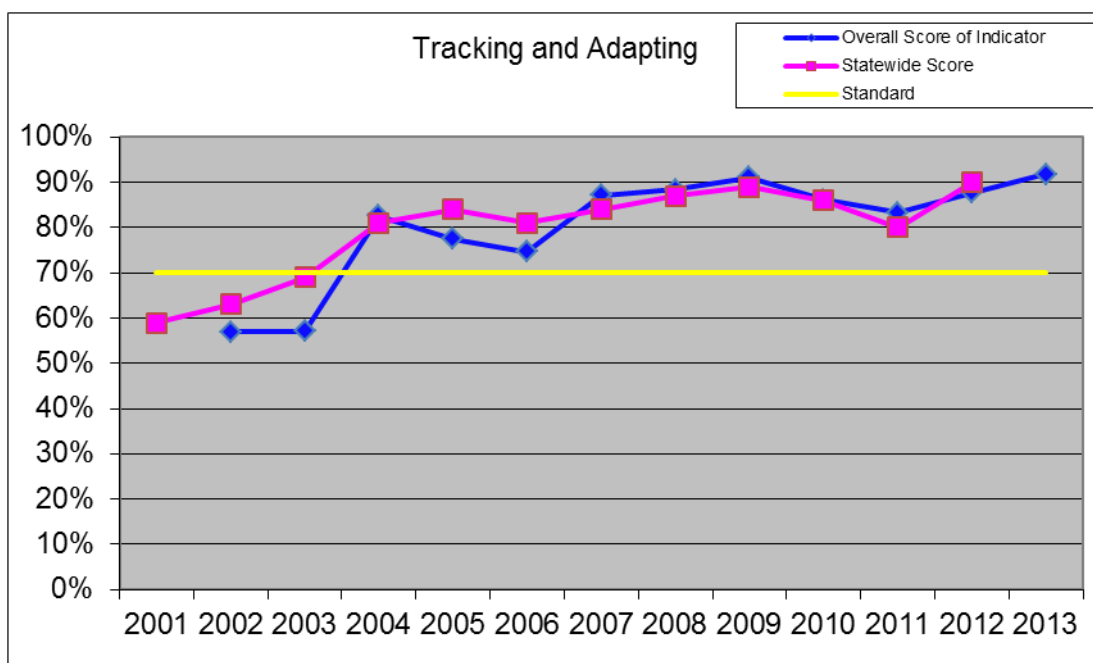
Intervention Adequacy													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator		3.60	3.96	4.48	4.45	4.21	4.54	4.42	4.52	4.49	4.40	4.18	4.41
Overall Score of Indicator		58%	71%	87%	86%	79%	89%	88%	97%	92%	85%	84%	88%
Statewide Score	68%	67%	77%	84%	89%	86%	91%	89%	96%	90%	85%	82%	



Tracking and Adapting

The Tracking and Adapting scores also showed improvement in both the average and the percentage scores, as well as exceeding last year's statewide score. The score is far above standard.

Tracking and Adaptation													
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average Score of Indicator		3.72	3.86	4.48	4.28	4.18	4.50	4.39	4.57	4.50	4.39	4.49	4.61
Overall Score of Indicator		57%	57%	83%	77%	75%	87%	88%	91%	86%	83%	88%	92%
Statewide Score	59%	63%	69%	81%	84%	81%	84%	87%	89%	86%	80%	90%	



V. Summary and Recommendations

Summary

During the FY2013 Salt Lake Region Qualitative Case Review (QCR), numerous strengths were identified about child welfare practice in the Salt Lake Region. It is clear that there is significant commitment and hard work devoted to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children and families. During the QCR review, a few opportunities for practice improvement were also identified that could improve and enhance the services being provided.

Regarding Child Status indicators, the Region substantially exceeded the 85% standard for Overall Child Status with a score of 94%. This was a significant increase from last's year's score of 86%. The Overall Child Status score had declined from 91% to 86% over the past four years. That trend was reversed this year with an excellent overall Child Status score. Only one case had an unacceptable score on Safety, resulting in a Safety score of 98%. Six of the other seven Child Status indicators scored above the 70% standard with scores ranging from 76% on Stability to 100% on Health/Physical Well-being. Prospects for Permanence continued to be the most challenging status indicator as it scored below 60% for the fourth year in a row. The Safety score (98%) exceeded the Overall Child Status score (94%), meaning two of the cases had unacceptable status on a majority of indicators other than Safety.

Salt Lake Region reversed the two-year downward trend on Overall System Performance last year and improved even further this year. The Overall System Performance score was above standard at 88%. Scores were above standard on five of the seven System Performance indicators (Engagement, Teaming, Assessment, Intervention Adequacy, and Tracking and Adapting). The Child and Family Plan score was identical to last year's score (65%) and again fell below standard. The Long-term View score experienced an eight point decline, which put it significantly below standard this year (61%). Scores on three System Performance indicators improved (Teaming, Intervention Adequacy, and Tracking and Adapting), which led to an increase in the Overall System Performance score (from 86% to 88%).

As part of the effort to address the scores that fell below standard, the Region will develop an improvement plan. After the Region has crafted that plan and it has been approved by the DCFS State Office, it will be available for review on the Division's website which can be accessed through the following link: http://www.hsdcsf.utah.gov/court_oversight.htm.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Salt Lake Region use the 50 case stories as part of their ongoing effort to improve the services they provide to children and families. The case stories could be used to help sustain performance that is above standard and elevate performance that is below standard. Review of the case stories in which the indicators scored substantially well or optimal could be used as examples in an effort to help duplicate great work. Careful review of the case stories regarding the circumstances that resulted in the unacceptable ratings could be beneficial in formulating training opportunities or specific strategies to address those challenges. The

region would benefit from focusing on the following three indicators which were the only three indicators below standard.

CHILD STATUS

Permanency has traditionally been one of the indicators whose score has lagged behind the other indicators. For the past four years the Permanency score has hovered between 57% and 59% with no significant improvement. This was the region's lowest scoring Child Status indicator this year at 57%, which is substantially below standard.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Long-term View was above standard last year at 73%, but fell below standard this year to 61%. This is not surprising given the Permanency score, as these two indicators tend to mirror each other. Increased attention to either indicator is likely to improve the score on the other.

Child and Family Plan score has hovered just at or below standard for the past several years. This year it was below standard at 65%, the fourth consecutive year that it has been below standard. Increased attention to updating the content of the plan as it comes due every six months and individualizing the plan to the needs of the child and family would lead to improved scores.